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National Detector
Dog Manual

Procedures

Public Awareness

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Introduction

Although public awareness activities are important to USDA's overall mission of protecting American agriculture, they are a secondary function of detector dog teams. Educating the public about the role of the agency is an excellent way to encourage voluntary compliance with regulations that prevent entry of restricted and prohibited fruits, vegetables, and meat through passenger baggage. Since most people find dogs appealing and are impressed by dogs that work, demonstrating the skills of detector dogs has proven to be very effective in promoting the AQI program.

Target audiences include international travelers and the travel industry, school groups, groups connected with the agricultural industry, brokers, and importers.



Important

Canine Officers should contact their RCPCs before participating in public awareness activities that maximize exposure. RCPCs will contact LPA regarding all media events such as newspaper articles, TV, and magazines.

Local managers (port directors and supervisors) should direct the public awareness activities at their work locations and keep RCPCs informed of activities of note.

Demonstrations

RCPCs are responsible for ordering public awareness information (see the **List of Outreach Information** in this section). Order outreach information and information for demonstrations through RCPCs. RCPCs should allow at least three weeks for processing the request.

Supervisors of Canine Officers are encouraged to take an active role in public awareness activities. Supervisory involvement can enhance appreciation of the role of Canine Officers, and supervisors can assist Canine Officers in presenting a positive and professional perspective of USDA's mission.

Requirements for Selecting Teams

To be selected to represent APHIS' Detector Dog Program at media events, Canine Officers must meet the following requirements:

- ◆ Have at least one year with the Detector Dog Program
- ◆ Maintain proficiency above 80 percent
- ◆ Have permission of their manager
- ◆ Maintain a professional appearance
- ◆ Be recommended by their RCPC

List of Outreach Information

LPA produces several items and resources to help Canine Officers prepare demonstrations and presentations, depending on the audience. The items and resources are listed below:

- ◆ Presentation folders, Don't Pack a Pest
- ◆ Coloring books, Miscellaneous Publication No. 1499, Beagle Brigade, Protecting American Agriculture, written in English and Spanish
- ◆ PPQ mouse pads
- ◆ Beagle Brigade activity sheet
- ◆ Bookmarks
- ◆ Pamphlets, Miscellaneous Publication No. 1539, USDA's Detector Dogs: Protecting American Agriculture (available online at APHIS' travel website)
- ◆ Fact Sheet, Detector Dog Program, February 2003 (available online under News/Publications/Factsheets)

- ◆ Beagle Brigade video
- ◆ Magnets
- ◆ Luggage tags
- ◆ Posters
- ◆ APHIS' Travel Website <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/travel/beagle.html>
 - ❖ Locations of teams
 - ❖ Beagle adoption/donation information

Major Media Calls

All requests from national news media should be forwarded to LPA through the RCPC. LPA's staff coordinates requests with USDA's officials and provides Canine Officers with guidance to ensure updated, accurate, and consistent information. It is advance notification to LPA that is key to the Agency's policy. The speed of electronic communications allows even local stories to be picked up and distributed nationally via news wires and networks.

Major media calls would include those from the following:

- ◆ Major daily newspapers, such as USA Today, The Wall Street Journal, Chicago Tribune, New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Albuquerque Journal, Dallas Morning News, the Tennessean, and any Washington metropolitan paper, such as The Journal of Commerce, or The Washington Post
- ◆ News magazines, such as Newsweek, Time, and National Geographic
- ◆ Network news programs, all network television shows and radio networks, such as NBC, CBS, ABC, Fox, and CNN
- ◆ News wire services, such as Associated Press, United Press International, and Reuters

Response to Major Media and Congressional Calls

Follow the steps outlined below when a request is received from the congressional staff or reporters for major media. These steps are found on LPA's Media and Congressional Reference Card.



Never immediately engage in a media discussion.

1. Refer all congressional inquiries for PPQ to LPA, Legislative Services at 202-720-2511. Refer inquiries for DHS to Sue Challis at 202-927-1547.
2. Obtain the reporter's name, media affiliation, and phone number.
 - A. Determine the topic for the interview or visit.
 - B. Find out when the media representative needs the information.
 - C. Respond to the request according to APHIS guidelines for responding to the news media (see general tips in this section).
3. Tell the reporter that someone will call them back shortly.
4. Notify your supervisor and call the RCPC, who will call LPA to discuss the request. For media inquiries contact LPA, Public Affairs at 301-734-7799. The regional offices are in California at 916-857-6243; Colorado at 970-494-7410; Florida at 352-332-1893.

General Tips for Media Events

Examples of effective media communication are described in USDA's Office of Communications Guidelines *Media Calls*, January 2002 (refer to **Figure 2-5-1**).


Listed below are general tips on dealing with reporters, community leaders, or members of organizations so you can ensure they provide accurate information to the public about Agency activities and programs.

- ◆ Wear a clean, ironed, well-maintained Class A uniform, including a tie and polished shoes
- ◆ Bathe the dog prior to the media event
- ◆ Make sure the dog's jacket is clean and non-reflective (each team should maintain a jacket for media events)
- ◆ Prepare several positive messages; restate them often.
- ◆ Remain standing during interview (even if on the phone).
- ◆ Know the name and title of your interviewer.
- ◆ Be courteous and polite.
- ◆ Stay within your field of expertise; never speculate.
- ◆ Do not debate.
- ◆ Do not justify Agency programs.
- ◆ Offer additional information to clarify a story.

- ◆ Avoid jargon and technical terms.
- ◆ Be aware of time lines. Keep the interview brief—think sound bytes.
- ◆ Use precleared information.
- ◆ Keep your port informed.
- ◆ Never immediately engage in a media discussion.

Media Relations Training

Canine Officers receive training on how to deal with the media during BCOT at NDDTC. Canine Officers receive a copy of the Media Package written by LPA.



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of Communications Guidelines

January 2002

Media Calls

All media calls to USDA must go through public affairs staff at the agencies or the Office of Communications.

Media calls should be given priority and returned ASAP.

The press secretary must approve all requests for on-camera interviews.

Public affairs staff should work directly with the press secretary and communications coordinator on high profile, controversial issues for media response.

Public affairs staff should work with the press secretary and communications coordinator on all public press events.

When agencies refer media calls to the Office of Communications, they should provide the following information:

■ Full name of the reporter	■ What is the deadline?
■ Name of the media outlet	■ When is it best for someone to call back or when will the reporter call back?
■ Phone, fax, e-mail and location of the reporter	■ Has the reporter checked the USDA Web site?
■ How the long the interview is expected to take	■ Is the request to respond to a specific event, statement or release by another party? If so, obtain a copy of the information.
■ If not obvious, description of media outlet including circulation, target audiences. If it is not a well known outlet, ask the reporter to provide copy of the publication or tapes of the show.	■ If the request is from a broadcast outlet, what is the format of the interview? One-on-one, debate, talk show, call-in, live or taped.
■ What is the story line? Questions?	■ Recommendation on request.
■ What information does the reporter already have on the subject?	

FIGURE 2-5-1: Media Calls

